

<b>Notice of Allowability</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/680,783	JONES, WILLIAM DALE	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Jeffrie R. Lund	1763	

-- **The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1.  This communication is responsive to amendment filed October 16, 2006.

2.  The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,2,4-10,18-22,25, and 26.

3.  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)  All    b)  Some\*    c)  None    of the:

1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.

3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.  
**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4.  A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.

5.  CORRECTED DRAWINGS ( as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.

(a)  including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review ( PTO-948) attached  
    1)  hereto or 2)  to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.

(b)  including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of  
    Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

6.  DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____.
3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date <u>See Continuation Sheet</u>	7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment
4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material	8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
	9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____.

### **EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Thomas B. Haverstock on January 12, 2007.

The application has been amended as follows:

Non-elected claims 11-16 have been cancelled.

Claims 23 and 24 have been cancelled.

### **REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE**

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The apparatus as claimed in the claims, specifically: a seal energizer that comprises a seal-energizing cavity coupled to the upper element and configured to maintain the upper element against the lower element by a sealing pressure generated within the seal-energizing cavity and a pressure controller configured to automatically non-linearly vary the sealing pressure to lag a processing pressure generated within the processing volume and maintain the processing volume during processing (claim 1); a lower element coupled to a seal-energizing cavity, wherein the upper element and the lower element are configured to be brought together to form a processing volume; and means for automatically non-linearly varying a sealing pressure within the seal- energizing cavity to maintain within a preselected range a difference between a sealing force and a

force generated within the processing volume, thereby maintaining the processing volume (claim 10); and means for maintaining the processing volume by sensing the processing pressure during processing and automatically generating a sealing pressure that non-linearly lags the sensed processing pressure (claim 22) were not found in or suggested by the art.

Claims 10 and 22 both include means plus function limitations under 112 sixth paragraph. These are defined in figure 11 of the specification as argued in paragraph I(B)(2) of the arguments filed October 16, 2006.

Applicant's arguments, see pages 12-25, filed October 16, 2006, with respect to the rejections found in the Office Action mailed July 13, 2006 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejections have been withdrawn.

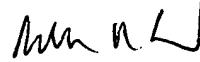
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrie R. Lund whose telephone number is (571) 272-1437. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (6:30 am-6:00pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Parviz Hassanzadeh can be reached on (571) 272-1435. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

  
Jeffrie R. Lund  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1763

JRL  
12/24/06